



Spotlight Initiative

ANNUAL NARRATIVE PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM TITLE: SPOTLIGHT COUNTRY PROGRAM IN GUYANA

PROGRAM START DATE: JANUARY 01, 2020

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 01, 2021 – DECEMBER 31, 2021



Program Title & Program Number	Priority regions/areas/localities for the Program
<p>Program Title: Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls in Guyana</p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:¹ 00119132</p>	<p>Nationally</p> <p>Indigenous communities of Region 1- Barima/Waini: Baramita and Matthews Ridge and Region 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni: Waramadong and Batavia.</p> <p>Coastal Communities of Region 4 – Demerara/Mahaica: East Coast corridor: Mon Repos to Good Hope, East Bank corridor: Diamond – Golden Grove</p> <p>Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne: Central New Amsterdam and Angoy's Avenue; Port Mourant and Tain.</p>
Recipient Organization(s)	Key Partners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNDP – United Nations Development Program 2. UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund 3. UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund 4. UN WOMEN - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 	<p>UN Agencies: ILO, IOM, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS</p> <p>Government: Office of the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs, Guyana Police Force, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Director of Public Prosecution, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Regional Democratic Councils, Neighborhood Democratic Councils, and Amerindian Village Councils.</p> <p>State Institutions: Judiciary, Parliament, Women and Gender Equality Commission, Rights of the Child Commission, Indigenous People's</p>

¹ The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).



	<p>Commission, Child Care and Protection Agency, University of Guyana Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), National Toshias Council, women's arm of political parties.</p>															
Program Cost (US\$)	Program Start and End Dates															
<p>Total Phase I budget, and (where OSC approved) Phase II budget as per the Spotlight CPD/RPD: USD 4,142,315</p> <p>Phase I and (where OSC approved) Phase II Spotlight funding:² USD 3,700,000</p> <p>Agency Contribution: USD 413,380</p> <p>Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="73 1123 751 1440"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of RUNO</th> <th>Spotlight Phase I (+ II, where OSC approved) (USD)</th> <th>UN Agency Contributions (USD)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UNDP</td> <td>787,874</td> <td>6,836</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNFPA</td> <td>1,223,524</td> <td>115,252</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNICEF</td> <td>793,243</td> <td>193,762</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNWOMEN</td> <td>895,358</td> <td>93,530</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>TOTAL: 3,700,000 409,380 ** RCO contributed \$4,000 as part of agency contributions for the baseline assessment</p>	Name of RUNO	Spotlight Phase I (+ II, where OSC approved) (USD)	UN Agency Contributions (USD)	UNDP	787,874	6,836	UNFPA	1,223,524	115,252	UNICEF	793,243	193,762	UNWOMEN	895,358	93,530	<p>Start Date: 01.01.2020</p> <p>End Date: 31.12.2022</p>
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	Report Submitted By: Yeşim Oruç UN Resident Coordinator															

² The Spotlight Contribution refers to the amount transferred to the Recipient UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).



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Acronym List

CAC	Child Advocacy Centre
CPD	Country Program Document
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSNRG	Civil Society National Reference Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
EU	European Union
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
FBL	Faith Based Leaders
FBO	Faith Based Organizations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GTWG	Gender Technical Working Group
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGBTQI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Queer Intersex
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOHSSS	Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
NSC	National Steering Committee
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PCU	Program Coordination Unit
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RDC	Regional Democratic Council
RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organization
SI	Spotlight Initiative
SOA	Sexual Offences Act
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls



Executive Summary

The year 2021 marked the first year of actual implementation for the Spotlight Initiative Program in Guyana, following the unprecedented delays in 2020. The program has realized the achievement of many significant milestones that have set the stage for strengthening collective efforts by stakeholders to create an environment for women and girls to live a life free of violence, harmful practices, and intersecting forms of discrimination.

During the reporting period, the continued negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic stymied efforts to accelerate the program as was initially envisioned. Adding to this, Guyana experienced major flooding throughout the country, which resulted in disruptions to the livelihood of many. Consequently, the program adopted alternative mechanisms as best as possible to accelerate implementation. Despite this, the program had initiated 77% of all its activities by the end of the year. One major accomplishment realized over the period was achieving the 70% delivery rate required for the disbursement of the second tranche of funds for Phase 1.

In keeping with the major thrust of the initiative to leave no one behind, there were engagements with stakeholders through the various governance levels for the program. These are the National Steering Committee (NSC), the Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG), and the Civil Society National Reference Group (CSNRG). The European Delegation (EU) was also involved in the process and participated in many of the activities held during the year. Through the implementation of activities by the CSOs, new partnerships were fostered with entities such as the Guyana Football Federation and the Guyana Cricket Board. These partnerships were critical in reaching individuals within the sporting fraternity. The program continues to seek opportunities for the establishment of new partnerships and to strengthen those already established.

While, with a program of this nature, the outcome results are not realistically seen within a few months of implementation, several outputs have been realized. These included the provision of psychosocial support to over 2,000 beneficiaries from across the Spotlight target communities; the distribution of several pieces of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials; the convening of capacity building sessions for health workers, police and other officers from within the sectors of Health, Social Services, Justice, youths, community and faith-based leaders, parents, teachers in various aspects of GBV related issues relevant to the specific target groups including data collection, analysis and use; the legislative review of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) and the Sexual Offences Act (SOA); and the development of a GBV Application iMatter.gy.

The Spotlight Initiative in Guyana is moving ahead with its agenda to bring about transformative changes in the lives of women and girls. In 2022, it is expected that the work will continue in legislation. Furthermore, there will be the development of models for the one-stop centers and the remote mobile services, a national database, in addition to other important activities that will contribute to and over time reduce gender-based violence in Guyana.



Contextual Shifts and Implementation Status

Contextual Shift

Subsequent to the unprecedented delays to convene the official launch of the program during 2020, the year 2021 was approached with great expectation for accelerated implementation of the program considering the introduction of vaccines that would stem the rising tide of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) infections. However, in addition to the prevailing consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to cause severe economic and social interruptions to the livelihood of many, the country had to grapple with the unforeseen natural disaster of a major flooding that affected all ten administrative regions of the country. These two major exogenous threats resulted in the further lockdown of Spotlight target communities and schools, and the reassignment of human resources to provide urgent response to areas affected by flooding respectively. While the COVID-19 restrictions have affected the implementation of all activities, the community-based and school-focused activities were severely impacted.

Throughout the year, there were consultations with stakeholders which resulted in the need to facilitate programmatic revisions that would better align with government priorities. Consequently, the initial plan to explore Restorative Justice options for Domestic Violence (DV) was deemed premature and risky in Guyana's context by civil society and other stakeholders. Accordingly, this activity under Legislation and Policy was replaced with the development of a sexual harassment policy framework after consultations with the GoG. In other instances, there were situations where the GoG had already embarked on initiatives such as strengthening of systems for use of forensic evidence, and this necessitated the revision of the initial workplan.

Capacity challenges for CSOs and government agencies continued to impact the rate of implementation. For example, several calls for proposals were advertised twice before being able to conclude an agreement, and in some instances, alternative modalities were utilized for engagements. One such modality saw the combination of technical and operational expertise of consultants and CSOs respectively for the implementation of activities. To minimize the risks of further delays, the use of existing implementation partners was adopted while the strengthening of the new and emerging CSOs was effected. A Program Officer with specific responsibilities for the Spotlight Initiative was recruited and assigned to the lead Government Ministry to support the Spotlight Initiative coordination and implementation efforts of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.

Implementation Status

Notwithstanding the contextual changes and the challenges they pose, the primary focus has been to advance implementation by using all available technology to deliver program results. This included using community radio stations, virtual platforms, and telephones to increase awareness



on GBV related issues and access to support services among the population, as well as conducting training, workshops, and interviews. In addition to the use of technology, where it was safe and possible, there were several coordinated outreaches with the European Union (EU) and the Government of Guyana in the target communities to create awareness of program activities. In July 2021, the program achieved the 70% delivery rate required for the disbursement of the second tranche of Phase 1 funds. By the end of 2021, 77% of the annual work plan was initiated with 38% commencing within the first half of the year and 39% in the latter half. Of the remaining 23% that are yet to commence, 6% is programmed to start in 2022, while 17% is off track. These activities have been delayed due to the challenges mentioned before and in a later section of this report.

Acceleration plans are in motion to ensure that those activities that are off track are executed favorably. It has been recognized that to achieve the desired acceleration there should be renewed and increased engagements with Government partners to secure the needed buy-in and support for some Spotlight Initiative activities.

Implementation progress by outcome area:

Spotlight Initiative - Outcome areas	Implementation progress as of December 31, 2021.
Outcome 1: Legal and Policy Framework	83%
Outcome 2: Institutions	31%
Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change	28%
Outcome 4: Quality Services	20%
Outcome 5: Data	46%
Outcome 6: Women's Movement	8%
TOTAL	24%

Program Governance and Coordination

Spotlight Initiative in Guyana continues to adopt the model for governance and coordination as outlined in the Country Program Document. This model allows for the broad base involvement of stakeholders and supports the tenets of the UN Reform of 'leaving no one behind.'



National Steering Committee

Under the leadership of the Honorable Minister Dr. Vindyha Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security and Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, the UN Resident Coordinator at that time, two meetings were convened. Its inaugural meeting was held in February 2021, where the Terms of Reference and the 2021 Annual Work Program were approved. At the second meeting in July 2021, strategic issues emerging from Spotlight implementation were presented and discussed, and several programmatic revisions were considered and endorsed. These issues focused mainly on ensuring there is linkage to existing programmes that could support programme implementation.

The NSC is the highest governing body of the program with an overall oversight and accountability responsibility. The membership caters for broad-based stakeholder involvement comprising of senior members from government and state agencies, representatives of the Civil Society National Reference Group (CSNRG), the Ambassador of the European Union and Heads of the Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNO) with the Minister of Human Services and Social Security and the UN Resident Coordinator as the co-chairs.

Civil Society National or Regional Reference Group (CSRG)

The CSNRG provides valuable support to the Spotlight Initiative through the involvement of its members at different levels of governance and implementation of the program. Members from within the group have seats on the National Steering Committee and the Gender Technical Working Group and they have provided pertinent input in the development of terms of references and in the review of reports. A significant milestone achieved by the CSNRG was the completion of their costed workplan to the tune of USD 15,000. This work plan includes advocacy and awareness activities that complement the activities under the varying pillars of the annual work plan. In this regard, the group has held meetings with the Guyana Press Association and community leaders in Region 6 to address concerns about media reporting specific to GBV incidences and prevention of violence within the community respectively, among other initiatives.

Greater collaboration with the CSNRG was encouraged through its representatives' meaningful participation in all monitoring missions during the latter half of 2021. Through these missions, the group was able to assess the activities undertaken and provide necessary feedback on their observations which would inform program implementation in respective communities.

The current membership stands at fifteen (15) and includes representation from vulnerable groups of the society, including the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) community, the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population, persons living with disabilities (PWD), women's rights organizations, sex workers, indigenous women and girls, rural and hinterland communities, and women's grassroots organizations. The group convenes monthly meetings to



discuss plans and matters of importance to the implementation of their work plan and the overall rollout of activities under the Spotlight Initiative.

The major challenges encountered during the period was access to the available Spotlight funding, full participation of all its members at their monthly meetings and the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In an attempt to have full attendance at meetings, the Chairperson engaged those members in question and subsequently some members have withdrawn their membership. In the first quarter of 2022 a call for nominations for replacement members will be issued. The issue of receiving funding was resolved in the last quarter of 2021.

Inter-agency coordination, technical committees, and other governance mechanisms

The Spotlight team worked together with agencies to ensure that the principles of UN Reform are integrated in the delivery of the program. As a result, the following opportunities for collaboration were fostered:

1. Quarterly meetings with Heads of Agencies to review progress and provide any necessary guidance relevant to program implementation were held with the RC. This included one meeting where the Minister of Human Services and Social Security, the lead government partner, participated.
2. Monthly coordination meetings with focal points of the UN Agencies for the respective pillars were also convened to facilitate reporting and discussions in relation to the implementation of program activities across each pillar. These meetings allow for joint planning and coordination, identifying challenges and mitigation measures, and leveraging expertise for greater efficiency and effectiveness.
3. The establishment of the Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG) comprising of members from relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to provide technical guidance relative to the implementation of activities was completed. Meetings are expected to be quarterly, and during the reporting period, two meetings were convened. These meetings provided a space for stakeholders to provide their input on how activities should be contextualized for maximum benefit and allow for coordination with similar activities outside of the Spotlight or UN Agencies. For example, discussion with the Project Officer of an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) project on data management at the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security that addresses data availability and capacities was initiated with UNDP, the lead agency for Pillar



Use of UN Reform inter-agency tools

The Spotlight Program by design is positioned to promote the use of inter-agency tools for collaboration. In Guyana, several of the UN Agencies occupy office space in one common physical area called the 'UN House'. The Programme Coordination Unit of the Spotlight Initiative program in Guyana is also located within the UN House. Consequently, the Program is included in the cost sharing of common services such as janitorial and security within this context.

Programme Partnerships

The success of the Spotlight Initiative is strongly grounded in the establishment of key partnerships that would support the overall outcome of the program, which is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and create an environment in which they can achieve their full potential. Consequently, the program sought to establish strong partnerships among key government agencies, state institutions, civil society organizations, other partners, the EU, and non-RUNO UN Agencies. The nature of these partnerships is outlined in the following sections:

Government

During the year under review, partnerships were established with several government and state institutions critical for realizing national ownership of the program and political buy-in for the sustainability of initiatives to end violence against women and girls. These include:

- 1. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security** – This Ministry is the principal government partner for Spotlight in Guyana since its mandate includes providing prevention and response mechanisms for those affected by family violence. Additionally, the Minister who serves as one of the Co-chairs of the NSC and represents the highest level of government engagement provides pertinent guidance to ensure alignment with government priorities. The Minister is also a personal champion of the SI and the GBV agenda. Through this partnership, linkages to agencies such as the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Chambers of the Attorney General were facilitated to support the activities under Pillar 1, which focuses on legislative reviews. This Ministry was also instrumental in supporting activities under Pillar 3, particularly regarding the Foundations program by providing staff members to participate in the training of trainers to roll out the Foundations program to young people on preventing gender-based violence. Under Pillar 4, the Minister also participated in the opening of the first Child Advocacy Centers in Region, 6 and the development of a GBV App. Under Pillar 5, the Ministry provided critical support in reviewing training materials for data capacity



building, was adequately represented at the training sessions and facilitated the approval of the methodology for the qualitative survey of survivors by the national Ethics Review Board. This level of partnership will support the program's efforts to ensure national ownership and sustainability through and beyond the Spotlight Initiative.

- 2. Ministry of Education** – Collaboration with the Ministry of Education was necessary to facilitate Pillar 3 activities geared at promoting prevention which targeted school-aged students. These activities included the commencement of efforts to strengthen the integration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education within the Health and Family Life curriculum, the establishment of the boys' and girls' clubs within selected secondary schools and the provision of a professional development course to enhance the capacities of school welfare officers in addressing the psycho-social needs of students.

Ministry of Home Affairs and the Guyana Police Force - Recognizing the significant role that the Guyana Police Force plays in responding to Gender Based Violence, in ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and in safeguarding and protecting survivors and in ensuring that survivors can access all other essential services such as medical care and safe accommodation, the role of the Guyana Police Force is a core component of the multi-sectoral response to GBV in Guyana. Particularly taking into account the crucial role of the Police in, for instance, assisting survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in obtaining protection orders, enforcing these orders, filing reports of IPV, in laying charges against perpetrators³, in assisting survivors to access medical services for their injuries and in being moved to a safe place, as well as in preserving evidence, and informing survivors of their rights and of the services available to them⁴. Collaboration among the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Guyana Police Force, and the Guyana Spotlight Initiative program facilitated the training of three hundred and thirty-five (335) Police officers in GBV as at December 31, 2021. The training was done under the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security COPSQUAD2000, with support under the Pillar 4 component of the Spotlight Initiative program to ensure that the Guyana Police Force is equipped with the skills necessary to effectively respond to cases of GBV. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Guyana Police Force were also identified as key partners for capacity

³ UN Women Caribbean. (2020). Caribbean Gender Based Violence Laws. GBV Countries. Guyana. Available from: <https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/caribbean-gender-portal/caribbean-gbv-law-portal/gbv-country-resources/guyana#WITLS>

⁴ UN Women Caribbean. (2020). Caribbean Gender Based Violence Laws. GBV Countries. Guyana. Available from: <https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/caribbean-gender-portal/caribbean-gbv-law-portal/gbv-country-resources/guyana#WITLS>



building in relation to the collection, analysis, and use of data on VAWG. During the reporting period a total of 60 Police and Statistical Officers of the Ministry received training in this area.

Ministry of Health - Given that Health Care Workers are one of the main first responder group in VAWG and a provider of essential services, the program is designed to engage the Ministry of Health across pillars. The Ministry was engaged during the period under review, with the aim of increasing the number of trained health care providers who are adequately equipped to support persons experiencing GBV and persons at risk of GBV as well as to increase the number of government service providers who have increased knowledge and capacities to deliver quality and coordinated essential services to women and girls' survivors of violence. Under pillar 5, data capacity training will be provided to health care workers in quarter 1, 2022.

3. **The Judiciary** – As one of the key stakeholders, especially for Pillars 1 and 4, there were several engagements with the Chief Justice and other officers of the Judiciary to discuss activities that have legal implications. The Judiciary is also represented on the NSC and GTWG.
4. **Local Authorities** –Key partnerships were established among Regional Democratic Councils, Neighborhood Democratic Councils, Amerindian Village Councils and Community Development Councils to prevent and respond to VAWG in all target Regions. Additionally, elected representatives and employees participated in the GBV Data Collection and Analysis workshops where their knowledge and awareness of GBV matters were enhanced, thus enabling them to play a valuable role in addressing GBV issues within their communities.

Civil Society

The engagement of civil society is recognized as a crucial partnership to support the achievement of the outcomes of Spotlight and are directly engaged primarily for activities under Pillars 3, 4 and 6. For the period under consideration, Spotlight established partnerships with a total of nine CSOs which are either woman-led, woman rights/feminist organizations, or both after successful completion of the procurement process to implement community-based initiatives. The CSOs that were engaged are ChildLink Inc, Blossom Inc, Youth Challenge Guyana, Help and Shelter, Red Thread, Merundoi Incorporated St. Francis Community Developers, the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, and Guyana Women Miners Organization.





The CSOs work within a range of demographics in Guyana including the indigenous community, rural populations that have limited access to services and faith-based actors which allows them to support the principle of 'Leaving No One Behind.' Although these CSOs successfully completed the recruitment process, there remains the operational challenge of reaching a wider network of CSOs due to capacity limitations in meeting the requisite criteria for the call for proposals. In response to this challenge, RUNOs provided customized support to CSOs to ensure that meaningful engagements could have been established. To empower other CSOs to participate in the recruitment process, under Pillar 6, capacity-building efforts have commenced for CSOs, including local grassroots organizations.

Under Pillar 3 Blossom Inc, Youth Challenge Guyana, St. Francis Community Developers, Help and Shelter, and Merundoi Inc. signed agreements to rollout prevention initiatives through awareness and sensitization sessions and the empowerment of youths, community-based leaders, including faith-based leaders, and owners of community shops to prevent and respond to GBV related issues.

Under Pillar 4, Help & Shelter, Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, St Francis Community Developers, and ChildLink Inc. were all engaged in providing psycho-social support to victims and survivors of GBV. Also, for the development of a suitable model for mobile remote services and one-stop centers, Guyana Women Miners' Organization and the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association were engaged, respectively, to support the development of the most appropriate models for Guyana, and better reach marginalized communities.

For Pillar 6, Help and Shelter and Red Thread were engaged to strengthen the technical capacities of CSOs and develop appropriate public accountability frameworks and a consultant was engaged to build the organizational capacity. Other accountability frameworks for social and community interventions done by service providers are scheduled for 2022. These activities are intended to strengthen Women's Movement and Civil Society Organizations to further advocate for women's rights in ending violence against women and girls.

In addition, the Civil Society National Reference Group has also been instrumental in guiding the overall implementation of the Spotlight Program and has conducted monitoring visits for certain activities. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, in-person meetings have not been able to occur, but it is hoped that in 2022, more networking and partnerships can be strengthened, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of these program activities.

Through all the engagements of the CSOs there has been new and renewed interest in GBV related matters by community leaders and members, which is expected to build stronger advocacy





mechanisms within the communities. There has already been a change in persons' response as observed by the Implementing Partners, who have reported that there has been an increase in reports of abuse coming out of the communities. It is also envisioned that through the accountability frameworks there will be a strengthening of the services provided.

European Union Delegation

The EU Delegation throughout the year 2021 was central to advancing the goals of the programme and kept engaged by Spotlight Initiative through varying mechanisms. The EU remains a member of the National Steering Committee, the Gender Technical Working Group, and the Spotlight Communication Committee. Several opportunities were provided for joint participation in activities, including the GBV App's official launch, sensitization and awareness session on the Foundations program, community outreaches to Spotlight target communities, monitoring missions, and the 16 Days of Activism radio interview and lighting up of the UN House Building. This level of active engagement provided an opportunity for hands-on information on the progress being made and collaboration for the greater good of the Spotlight Initiative. In addition to the foregoing, the delegation received monthly status updates on implementation and was engaged regularly through its Focal Point on matters concerning the program.

Cooperation with other UN agencies

PAHO remains the main UN Associated Agency that has been engaged directly in Spotlight related activities. Through this partnership, training of health care providers in varying aspects of response to GBV survivors who seek medical services was catered for in 2021. With the support of the Ministry of Health, it is anticipated that such training will continue in 2022. Notwithstanding, other UN Associated Agencies were engaged through their respective Spotlight Focal points throughout 2021.

Other Partners

The Spotlight Initiative continued to capitalize on all opportunities presented for collaboration, particularly with other non-traditional partners. For instance, through the leadership of the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security partnership has been established with the Guyana Bar Association to provide pro-bono legal support to victims of GBV. It is expected that other partnerships with the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana and the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha will be formalized in the first quarter of 2022 to support the rollout of women empowerment activities under Pillar 3. Another emerging partnership spearheaded by the MOHSSS is with the Guyana





Press Association. This relationship is geared to support access to funding for young girls impacted by violence through the writing of their stories. These interventions are further detailed in the Capturing Change by Outcome Level below.

During the 16 Days of Activism activities, the Spotlight Initiative partnered with the Guyana Cricket Board, the Guyana Football Association, and the Guyana Council of Organization for Persons with Disabilities to conduct sensitization and awareness sessions for coaches, players, administrators of the sporting organizations and women with disabilities on GBV related issues. The sessions were well received, and the sporting organizations have requested follow-up sessions.

As part of the activities to build institutional capacity, the University of Guyana has been selected as a key partner in developing course content that will address family and gender-based violence to be delivered by the institution. The objective is that people completing this introductory course will now have improved knowledge and understanding of GBV and be better placed to become agents of change.

To reach the private sector community, initial engagements have commenced inviting companies to embrace the Women Empowerment Principles which seek to provide an avenue for companies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community.

Results

Capturing Broader Transformations Across Outcomes

Despite the setbacks faced in 2021, the program has realized several successes. In ensuring that the Initiative is implemented under the principle of 'Leaving No One Behind', strategic partnerships with CSOs were formalized to implement community-driven programs to increase knowledge and awareness of family violence, its impacts, and opportunities available for survivors, including referral services. As a result, over 2,217 beneficiaries (women, girls, men, and boys), including survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all target regions/communities, received psycho-social services inclusive of counselling and forensic interviews for survivors of GBV as well as referrals for other supportive services, community-based awareness, and advocacy initiatives. Over 15,000 IEC materials were distributed in the communities; Capacity building sessions were held with youths, community and faith-based leaders, parents, teachers on SRHR, life skills, and GBV related issues. Transformational behavior change is expected to be evident in the near future as beneficiaries have committed to applying the knowledge to their lives and sharing with others. One beneficiary noted





that since the Spotlight Initiative was brought to their community, the skills taught have enabled them to better assist the people who are facing gender-based violence. Other beneficiaries have even admitted to a reduction in instances of gender-based violence in their communities given the presence of initiatives under the Spotlight Initiative.

Implementation of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

The Spotlight Initiative in Guyana in 2021 embraced the participatory monitoring and evaluation approach and executed its monitoring missions following the guiding principles. This included sharing of the status of activities, experiences and challenges via monthly meetings and bilateral meetings with the RUNOs. The Civil Society National Reference Group were engaged as necessary and for joint planning and monitoring activities, enabling active engagement and eager participation. The monitoring visit to the communities included members from the Guyana Spotlight Team, the Spotlight focal point at the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Program Manager from the Delegation of the European Union, a member of the Civil Society National Reference Group and the focal points for the respective RUNOs-UNICEF and UNFPA.

A questionnaire was developed jointly and implemented with the use of focal group discussions or key informant interviews and administered by the monitoring team. These sessions were conducted within the parameters of COVID19 protocols with the beneficiaries and the providers of service in the communities. The beneficiaries were identified via the implementers/CSOs and based on reports from implementing agency/CSO. The findings of the questionnaire/reflections from rights holders/beneficiaries during participatory monitoring exercise are reflected below.

Relevance

Strategically, the overall objective of Spotlight Initiative Guyana is designed to contribute to addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls (VAWG) with an emphasis on prevention, introducing and expanding on preventive measures, addressing legislative and policy gaps, improving institutional capacities, enhancing service delivery systems especially in remote communities, improving data collection and use, and building a stronger civil society response to ensure justice is delivered to women and girls experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and violence. There was a general acknowledgement of training sessions and Information and Education Communication materials being disseminated on violence and abuse.

The monitoring team met various beneficiaries and stakeholders during these visits including law enforcement authorities, village councils and other community persons to triangulate information in the output level of the work plan. In general, all information obtained from the various and diverse



groups/persons revealed that they were pleased and satisfied with the project's output although more awareness is needed at the different age groups. The SI program has been doing a good job in establishing the Gatekeepers group and educating people on abuse. It was noted that the services provided within the hinterland result in exceptionally lengthy delays and the quality of service provided is questionable at times. As reported by villagers, there are no counsellors at the health centers in the hinterland communities. There have been some issues with the police in terms of enforcement. It was observed that the community health workers do not have supplies of the rape kits, morning-after pills, and other essential items to handle the cases. The official launching of the 914 GBV hotline service by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security during the last quarter of 2020, provides a mechanism to address some of these challenges.

The discussions with the beneficiaries and stakeholders highlighted that changing the mindset and culture of persons residing in the targeted communities is necessary so that gender-based violence is no longer viewed as typical or normal. This was clearly expressed by teenagers who are more socially aware and reside in small, close-knit communities where there is a lack of privacy and absence of protection. Personal issues are deemed as common knowledge, which is then decided upon by the elders in the village/community, who often considers GBV as a 'norm.' It is clearly seen that SI has the potential to make considerable progress in the long run in reducing violent and abusive behavior in the home. This has been slowly coming into fruition through the different exercises of public awareness and building associations or partnerships within these communities by the CSOs so that these communities can have access to wider network resources. The Child Advocacy Centers in Region 6 have been very responsive and permits youngsters to recount their story once and receive counselling to deal with the trauma resulting from abuse. It provides explanations to arraignments and offers support when the victims and their families show up in court.

As mentioned above, the SI interventions are on the right track and respond to the real need of the community people in their respective target areas. Nevertheless, a few teenagers felt that SI will not make a difference in the lives of the people in the communities.

Efficiency

The monitoring approach was one of results-oriented monitoring, whereby the beneficiary's progress in implementing the project in accordance with the work plan and against indicators. Through cooperation with the CSOs and national and regional counterparts, SI has shown some level of efficiency by avoiding a repetition of efforts, even in the context of COVID-19. All the SI activities are underway or have been completed as per work plan and have been verifiable even in cases where the opinion of the residents was not entirely positive.



Effectiveness

The monitoring team observed that the community people and local authorities had started to understand the concept of gender-based violence. Some residents indicated that even though they were aware of the concept of violence, they were not aware of the different facets of abuse and violence.

Potential Sustainability

As has been widely accepted, sustainability is not just about funding. It is concerned with creating and building momentum to maintain community-wide change by involving a multiplicity of stakeholders who can develop long-term buy-in and support throughout the community. The monitoring team observed during visits that in some communities the sustainability trend is evident in a positive way; in that the Village Council members, Law Enforcement Officers and Health Workers appear to be adequately engaged and sufficiently willing to continue providing and accelerating the level of support provided to the residents within the various target communities.

One community, unfortunately, appeared to have minimal buy-in from the village leader: the Toshao, who seems to have other priorities. In this instance, the other Village Council members appeared to be adequately involved in the roll-out of Spotlight activities within the communities targeted, through the efforts of the implementing CSO partners.

Generally, the sense of sustainability among the local authorities, village councils, and others within the communities have been formed, and some levels of capacity built, and advocacy campaigns carried out during the SI implementation period to date.

Recommendations

The pandemic has exacerbated gaps that put vulnerable individuals, particularly adolescents and youths from low-income families at greater risk for family violence. Access to the conditions and resources necessary to enhance learning and development as well as limited financial relief measures are all challenges that contribute to heightened levels of risk for family violence.

It has been suggested by interviewees that strengthening critical service delivery systems such as counselling, providing a shelter for the victims, training, and support in establishing small businesses will aid in achieving the objectives of SI. There is a need for livelihood initiatives coupled with psycho-social support, especially for depressed/informal communities. It is deemed necessary to engage community members in healthful activities where they live, work, worship, play, and learn.



In some communities, a one-on-one training approach can also promote learning on fostering collaboration/leadership skills and improving public health. These approaches include mentoring, self-help guides or books, online training (e.g., e-learning, webinars), and CD or DVDS. Some approaches would involve a combination of in-person training and electronic media. However, regardless of the approach used, CSOs should ensure that training participants have enough time to accomplish the learning objectives, that training content is relevant to the participant, that follow-up opportunities to apply learned skills are provided (shortly after the training), and that a variety of teaching methods (e.g., visual, auditory, applied hands-on work) are used. Some topic areas include relationship and parenting skills, other skill-building activities for the communities, and the application of appropriate technology to modern policing for law enforcement.

There is a need for a more frequent presence of implementing partners in the field since in some communities, some residents were not very aware of SI aside from its name, the funder, or the implementing organization. It is necessary to improve the channels of communication, conflict resolution and the various channels of reporting and asking questions about human rights, the rights of victims and the consequences for perpetrators.

It was noted that in Baramita, communication and printed materials did not have the logo of the European Union and the translations in Spanish were not well articulated. There were no translations in Carib, the main indigenous language of Baramita.

When the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security is directly involved in monitoring visits to target communities, much larger impacts follow. The focal point for SI within the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security participated in one such monitoring visit. Going forward, it will be important for the SI focal point in the Ministry to be more involved in the monitoring activities.

The monitoring team noted that additional time is required in the communities to conduct a detailed monitoring visits to better understand some of the concerns of the residents, particularly in the hinterland. The village of Baramita is one such valid example since it was extremely challenging to communicate with the residents and the interactions were limited to village council members, few business owners and law enforcement officials. The engagement and active involvement of various stakeholders and EU at all levels have resulted in a better connection and trust with the SI.

Capturing Change at Outcome Level

Outcome 1: Legal and Policy Framework



In 2021, two (2) comprehensive research was completed to support the strengthening of evidence-based reporting through policy and legislative review on Domestic Violence. The research was: 1- a report on New and Emerging Forms of Violence and 2- a Legislative Analysis of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Legislations. Based on this foundational work, a new Domestic Violence Bill 2021 was drafted, with a view to rendering further support to efforts to protect survivors in cases involving domestic violence through the granting of a protection order, providing the police with powers of arrest where a domestic violence offence occurs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Through strong partnership and engagement on the legal and policy agenda, it was also agreed that Legal and Policy work would also be done with respect to the issue of Sexual Harassment, where a new proposed Bill is expected to be completed before the end of December 2022. This is a new activity under the EU-UN SI Program and will complement the package of legislative reforms to advance prevention and response to GBV in Guyana.

Outcome 2: Institutions

To build institutional capacity as well as establish a specialized course on addressing family and gender-based violence, UG developed a course titled "Resilience against and Disruption of Gender-Based Violence". This course is an introductory course that raises awareness on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), focusing on its causes and consequences and methods of intervention towards human resiliency and social change. The course content covers global and regional issues related to GBV and offers a unique local overview and intervention mechanisms that center human resilience as the outcome. The intended beneficiaries include service providers, policy makers and other persons who will lead GBV and response approaches including system strengthening. Additionally, this course will support the broader plan to strengthen the gender equality unit of the University including the articulation of a policy on GBV for the University and support for related courses in Social Work, which are also being supported by UNICEF. The course is currently being reviewed by UG's internal review process and will be offered in the first quarter of 2022.

Preliminary work was also completed on the costed national plans of action on GBV, and consultations/ reviews are expected to be completed by January- with a final product to be available in the first quarter. With the development of the plan it is anticipated that there will be greater emphasis on GBV prevention and response through adequate budgeting and planning for services. It is also envisaged that with the use of the plans coordination efforts among partners would be enhanced. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security has also requested support for the development of a strategic plan, based on their lead role in preventing and responding to violence (across the life cycle) and to guide/advance their own internal planning needs on GBV and GBV





related elements. Additionally, the Mapping of Social Protection Programmes (within the context of GBV) is expected to be completed in 2022. Finally, 50 adolescent girls in alternative care were targeted through the MoHSSS's Story Board Initiative to impart creative writing skills along with functional literacy to develop stories about their challenges and how they surmounted them.

Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change

In 2021, the Spotlight initiative built on the achievements made in 2020 with a particular focus on working on tools and knowledge products aimed at behavior change. A significant amount of work has been conducted in this area targeting behavior change. This includes the development of tool kits and manuals to address the behavior of men and boys in Indigenous communities and hinged upon community dialogues so a tailored approach could be taken. For example, it was soon discovered that sport was effective in reaching young men and boys and overcoming language difficulties. As a result, 133 boys attended sessions that included topics on substance abuse and child rights. A challenge has been the belief among community leaders that substance abuse is the main cause of GBV, and that due to the COVID-19 restrictions, consumption of substances has been reduced; therefore, GBV is occurring less. However, when separate interviews were held with women, they did report that violence was still occurring but that it was over financial disputes. The tool kits and manuals are important since it provides field staff with the tools to support community members in reflecting further on the root causes of GBV as well as to support efforts to educate community leaders, potential perpetrators, and survivors of what they can do to prevent family violence. The tools have been approved by all relevant stakeholders. The CSO implementing partner, Youth Challenge Guyana, have commenced training of its staff to support roll-out of this intervention in target communities in 2022.

There was also a greater emphasis on targeting the children and young people, recognizing that educating the youth of Guyana is the most effective way to strengthen behavior change intervention efforts and prevent GBV. One activity to enhance this transformative agenda was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Gender Studies, University of Guyana, to train 35 school welfare officers in a six-week intensive Professional Development course on gender responsive approaches in addressing the psychosocial needs of children. It is expected that in 2022 the new strategies learned will be piloted in enhanced counselling environments with the aim of reducing GBV in schools and by extension the wider community.

In addition, in partnership with the MoHSSS the Spotlight Initiative began work on the Foundations Program, which aims to empower young people to prevent GBV by understanding the root causes and create a network of young people who will advocate for non-violent relationships. The first step of this Program involved developing training of trainer (ToT) curriculum and manuals for facilitators to deliver training to young people. Twenty-one persons participated in the ToT program, which was



developed and delivered by experts in implementing the Foundations Program in the Caribbean. These persons were selected from a wide cross-section of stakeholder groups, which included CSNRG, MoHSSS, MoE, Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports (MoCYS), Faith based and Community Leaders. The training was well-received, with 71% attendance rate, and participants stating that "I will be more mindful of when working with young people to let them lead and I will listen" and "the discussion on sexuality was the most meaningful I've ever had". Whilst all the participants were passionate about preventing GBV, for many, it was the first time they had ever encountered these topics, so only 31% of participants that attended were qualified as being able to deliver training, the rest were classified as co-facilitators to support full qualified facilitators. However, this was a good first step and given the limited awareness of the topic trainings to young people will commence in 2022.

There has also been work to engage other important and culturally influential stakeholders such Faith-Based leaders and Sporting bodies in the fight against GBV. Through the CSO Meroundoi Inc., a diversity, equality, and inclusion policy were drafted for the Guyana Football Federation and Guyana Cricket Board. The policies include standards on dealing with sexual harassment, bullying, exploitation and abuse with steps for handling cases. Both sporting bodies outlined their zero-tolerance stance for any players or staff found to have committed GBV, which is an important statement that carries cultural significance, particularly for men and boys. Meroundoi Inc. also developed a tool kit for faith-based leaders to challenge the conception that GBV and VAWG is a natural part of relationships to create safe spaces for survivors to seek help and support. Another milestone realized by this IP was the creation and airing of 5 public service announcements (PSAs), aired on local and community radio stations. Two of these PSAs were translated into nine Amerindian Languages namely Wapishan, Macushi, Carib, Arawak, Arecuna, Akawaio, Wai, Patamona, Warrau) for broadcast on the 8 Community radio stations across Guyana. This allowed for better communication of the GBV messages to the indigenous groups in their own languages.

In the latter part of 2021, an expert was engaged to work with the private sector through the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) which is a framework to promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace, and wider community. The main objective of this work is to firstly increase awareness of the WEPs in general, particularly the steps that businesses and companies can take to make the workplace safer for women and girls and secondly, encourage more private sector organizations to become signatories to WEPs. This involves developing a gender action plan which sets out a roadmap on how to treat all employees fairly, protect their human rights, promote safe and healthy workplaces, and engage and advocate for gender equality with the wider community. The initial consultations were conducted in 2021, and the workshops and development of gender action plans are expected for the first quarter of 2022.



Recognizing that it is vital to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity, the process of engaging a consultant to strengthen the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) component of the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum in schools has commenced. The vacancy was advertised three times before a suitable candidate was engaged. The Consultant will develop implementation manuals (modules) to be used in-service teachers, in and out of school children and within communities.

During the reporting period, four (4) CSOs were engaged to raise awareness through targeted interventions which are specific to their locations. Over 2,000 persons were reached with information on Gender-Based Violence, Health, Education, referrals and the Justice System via radio, TV, and community engagements with shopkeepers, FBOs (Faith-Based Organization), Youth and Sports groups and members of the communities. Noteworthy, there were at least three (3) gatekeepers groups formed which aimed at strengthening the protective environment within communities.

The CSOs were initially deterred by the lockdown of most communities due to COVID-19 increased cases. However, the CSOs have found alternative methods of reaching the intended beneficiaries by hosting radio and TV Programs, poster competitions, online training of shopkeepers and meeting in small groups to provide information. Over 300 posters, referral cards and booklets were produced and distributed. It was heartening to note that the awareness sessions in Region 6 caused a significant increase in demands for social services in that region.

The CSOs strengthened the community advocacy platforms and continued to engage the police, health providers, social workers, FBOs, sports groups at the local level, and designed suitable Programs for the areas. In Baramita, the CSO partner used the native Carib Dialect to encourage a local campaign to reduce substance abuse and develop safer lifestyle. The campaign is titled “Efe Taka Mata Kopa” which means “Change It Up”. Its aim is to inspire and educate the community on alternative behaviors to keep the community safe and free from GBV.

Outcome 4: Quality Services

Support for the delivery of GBV services under Covid-19 Response Plan

During the last quarter of 2020, four CSO (ChildLink Inc., Help and Shelter, Guyana Responsible Parenthood, and St. Francis Developers in collaboration with United Brick Layers) were engaged under the Covid-19 Response Program, to provide GBV related services within SI targeted communities in Regions 4 and 6, which continued into the first half of 2022. During this period, there was the establishment of the first two Child Advocacy Centres (CAC) in Region 6, in partnership with ChildLink Inc., and the Child Care and Protection Agency of MoHSSS, to provide psycho-social





support for children who were victims of sexual abuse and their families. The Centres were officially commissioned on February 27, 2021. As of December 2021, 159 cases were reported and addressed. To support the effective functioning of the CAC, technical staff from the Childcare and Protection Agency, the Ministry of Health, the Guyana Police Force, the Judiciary, and ChildLink benefited from capacity building workshops. These CACs are currently sustained by the MoHSSS and the EU.

Support was provided to CSOs for the delivery of GBV related services, as part of the COVID-19 response. This allowed for the provision of psychosocial support to women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, and teen mothers as well as the training of community personnel such as pharmacists and shop owners to aid efforts to share GBV referral information within targeted communities. Staff and workers in emergency and essential services sector were trained to disseminate IEC products, assist vulnerable populations in accessing direct referral assistance and enhanced their own understanding/knowledge of the various forms of GBV. The intervention aided improved access to at risk youth populations for enhanced prevention/protection from GBV and strengthened GBV referral services. The intervention was particularly necessary to strengthen the national response to the increased incidences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and constraints faced by GBV survivors and persons at risk of GBV in accessing GBV supportive services.

Readiness Assessment

A Readiness Assessment for the strengthening of the GBV Essential Services Package in Guyana (in line with international standards) was completed in 2021; to review existing services and to identify gaps in essential services delivery in Spotlight target regions (Regions 4 & 6 (costal) and Regions 1 & 7 (hinterland)). The Readiness Assessment included data analysis and recommendations to address gaps at the central and decentralized level within target regions, and it informed 2021 program activities to strengthen GBV Essential Services Package for Guyana. The overall expected impact resulting from the enhancement of the essential services to GBV survivors/victims and those at risk will be to increase accessibility to services and to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders across the four key sectors (health, social services, justice, and police) to prevent and to respond to VAWG cases appropriately and empower the communities to save lives.

COPSQUAD 2000

In 2021, two hundred and eighty (280) Police Officers were trained in GBV in support of strengthening the delivery of GBV essential services. The training was done using a training manual developed by UNFPA under the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security COPSQUAD2000 and delivered through training sessions conducted with support from the Spotlight Initiative program to ensure that the Guyana Police Force is equipped with the skills necessary to effectively respond





to cases of GBV. Through this initiative, the capacity of ranks was enhanced to ensure that they are aware of all the procedures surrounding confidentiality, protocols on dealing with cases of various types of GBV such as IPV, rape and sexual assault, and techniques of interviewing survivors. It is envisioned that this will assist in creating an enabling environment that encourages survivors to report abuse. It will also create a positive cycle as more survivors will become empowered and comfortable reporting to the police, which will allow more survivors to have access to justice and for there to be less impunity for perpetrators.

Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative

On December 9, 2021, the Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative was launched by the MoHSSS in partnership with the Guyana Bar Association and the UN Spotlight Initiative. Through this initiative, the members of the Guyana Bar Association have committed to providing pro-bono legal services for five hundred (500) GBV survivors per year. This partnership will further strengthen access to justice for GBV survivors who may have otherwise been unable to obtain legal assistance. It also provides opportunities for all sizes of law firms in Guyana to participate in pro-bono work, thereby improving social cohesion, cultivating a pro-bono culture across the profession, and helping to break the cycle of GBV in Guyana. Under Pillar 4 of the Guyana Spotlight Initiative Program, support will be provided in the recruitment of an officer to manage the operationalization of the Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative.

iMatter GBV App

In partnership with the MoHSSS and the Spotlight Initiative, a digital technological (online) platform called **iMatter.gy** was developed and launched in March 2021, at the International Women's Day Exhibition hosted by the Ministry. Recognizing the importance of guaranteeing the safety of GBV survivors and persons at risk of GBV, iMatter.gy provides GBV survivors and persons at risk of GBV with an additional option for seeking support. The iMatter.gy App serves as a central online portal for members of the public, providing current information on GBV essential services, laws and policies, information, and resources on various forms of GBV in Guyana, as well as linkage to the national 914 GBV Hotline service. Following the formal launch in March 2021, further improvements were made to the App, which was relaunched on December 31, 2021. The improvements include access to GBV easy communication tools, early warning systems to protect individuals from GBV and the dissemination of more GBV information to survivors and persons at risk of GBV.

The App is currently available for free download in the Google play store and the Apple store, using the links below. Once downloaded, internet connectivity is not required to access the App's features.

- Apple Store - <https://apps.apple.com/tt/app/imatter-gy/id1591635736>





- Google Play Store - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gy.techlify.moss>

The App is constantly being updated by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security to provide accurate information on the available services and resources. In 2022, there will be sensitization sessions on the availability and use of the app. Through the development of this technology, it is expected that access to GBV easy communication tools and early warning systems to protect individuals from GBV would be effortless.

GBV 24 Hours Hotline Service

A dedicated 24 hours 914 GBV Hotline service was launched by the MoHSSS on December 11, 2020. Under the Guyana Spotlight Initiative, support was provided in 2021 for the procurement of telecommunications equipment to enable the operations of the 914 GBV Hotline service. Through this partnership, GBV related services, access to at-risk youth populations for enhanced prevention/protection from GBV and GBV referral services are strengthened.

Procurement of Furniture and Equipment for Shelters and Safe Spaces

Furniture and equipment were procured for shelters managed by the MoHSSS and two (2) NGOs. Items procured were formally handed over on October 1, 2021, to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and a well-known NGO -Help & Shelter- to support the operations of [GBV shelters/safe spaces in Guyana](#). The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security subsequently donated items to a well-known LGBTQ NGO, the Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD) to support the operations of SASOD's safe space for the LGBTQ community.

Models of GBV services delivery

Apart from the foregoing, in 2021, several other activities were initiated in partnership with the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. These activities are as follows: the strengthening of the GBV Essential Services Package for Guyana; the development of a GBV One-Stop Center model for Guyana; the development of a GBV mobile and remote services delivery model for Guyana; the provision of technical support to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security for the strengthening of GBV case management services in Guyana; and the provision of technical and other support to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security for the strengthening of the GBV information management system in Guyana. All these activities are expected to produce concrete deliverables in 2022.

Outcome 5: Data



Capacity Building for GVB Data Collection and Analysis

Reliable and timely data are essential to inform evidence-based decision making. Under the Spotlight Initiative, a centralized database to identify VAWG trends will be developed to guide the creation of evidence-based national and subnational policies and processes for targeted, accessible, and relevant prevention programs. To support this goal, ten virtual and in-person workshops were conducted between September and December 2021, where one hundred and twenty-two (122) participants from across varying agencies and ministries including Ministries of Human Services and Social Security, Health, Education, Home Affairs/Guyana Police Force, Legal Affairs, Governance and Parliamentary Affairs, the Judiciary, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Regional Administrations, and Amerindian Village Councils in the piloted regions and CSOs were trained in GBV data collection, analysis and use.

The objectives of the workshops were to a) educate/engage the participants on all aspects of violence against women and girls, b) facilitate an engagement on data collection, analysis, storage, retrieval, and dissemination practices currently undertaken on VAWG in Guyana, and to introduce the new VAWG data system and acquire feedback based on participants professional experiences, and c) share insights on how to improve the data system through role-play and interactive sessions. Throughout the workshops, participants were requested to respond to specific questions regarding VAWG in Guyana through several Menti Polls, which triggered discussions on various aspects of VAWG, including the lack of good data, the absence of comparable data tools, and all cultural, technical, and strategic/judicial aspects of VAWG prevalence in Guyana. Additionally, fifty-five (55) tablets were procured for distribution to key stakeholders to strengthen data collection in Health, Social Services, Judiciary and Law Enforcement sectors. The development of the national database will commence in 2022, with a multi-stakeholder forum on data sharing protocols to be undertaken towards the finalization of said protocols for access to and use of the database.

Qualitative Analysis on Experiences of Survivors and Perspectives of Key Stakeholders concerning Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Guyana

The Guyana Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey was conducted by the Guyana Bureau of Statistics in 2018 with support from UN WOMEN, UNDP, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the IDB in collaboration with the Global Women's Institute of George Washington University and the University of Guyana. This survey provided useful baseline data on the prevalence of VAWG locally and made available for the first time in Guyana, a comprehensive examination of the nature, prevalence, and experience of violence against women and girls using a mixed methodology. Under the Spotlight Initiative, a deeper qualitative analysis is examining further factors such as those that inhibit victims from accessing services and will identify additional entry points for addressing VAWG in Guyana. Through the qualitative methodology, details about emotions, preferences, motivations, and gender dynamics are being extensively examined as this aspect was constrained in the previous survey, particularly in indigenous/hinterland communities,



due to limited location because of logistic challenges. The final report of this study will be presented by the end of the first quarter of 2022.

Outcome 6: Women's Movement

In 2021, significant progress was made towards activities aimed at building the women's movement in Guyana despite the significant challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic created. Outcome 6 activities are dependent on face-to-face interaction to build relationships and networks. The inability to meet, coupled with the limited access to technology and electricity shortages, led to creative solutions and flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances, which has led to some important results in 2021.

Considerable progress was made towards developing social accountability mechanisms for public institutions to improve the advocacy and prevention of VAWG efforts. Local civil society organizations Help & Shelter and Red Thread were engaged to spearhead this task and it was decided that public accountability scorecards could be piloted in health centres and police stations, as they are often the first services that women and girls are most likely to seek if experiencing violence.

Relying on expert guidance and global experiences of best practices when implementing social accountability, Help & Shelter and Red Thread developed questionnaires for health centres and police stations, respectively. It is expected that after the piloting of these tools is completed, there will be wider circulation with stakeholders for their input before finalizing during the first quarter of 2022.

A consultant was engaged to strengthen the Technical & Operational Capacities of CSOs. The Consultant mapped registered and unregistered CSOs who work on ending violence against women and girls. The mapping covered the institutional dimensions of (i) governance, (ii) implementation, (iii) program management and (iv) capacity gaps. Additionally, an analysis of the CSOs in relation to their suitability and capacity to engage in activities under pillar 6 was conducted and training needs assessment was conducted where the CSOs identified their capacity needs.

The mapping and self-assessment revealed that 71% of those CSOs responding to the survey focused their work on serving women and girls. However, the data showed that 63% of the groups did not have a current strategic plan. This means that while most of the CSOs have indicated the need for training regarding gender-based violence and violence against women and girls, it is an indication that many CSOs need for GBV training is being driven by the potential availability of funding for GBV projects and that GBV is not a part of their strategic focus.



Among the needs which the CSOs identified for capacity building are NGO/CSO Management; Accounts & Project Management; Funding and Self-Financing; Human Resources management; Grant writing; Monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning; Understanding human rights, General awareness of gender-based violence; Understanding human rights and continued education on GBV.

The consultant will proceed to provide tools, training manuals and build the capacity of CSOs, especially in the geographic locations where the Spotlight Initiative is being implemented. It is envisioned that in the next call for proposals, smaller CSOs will be sufficiently empowered to submit proposals

Building on the needs to build organizational capacity, there will be a provision of grants to Guyana's women's rights and civil society organizations to promote capacity building for advocacy, networks to strengthen social justice activism. To address the persistent challenge of the limited capacity of civil society organizations to apply, a smaller more agile grant giving modality will be used.

Finally, the civil society reference group has been instrumental in shaping and guiding the work of Spotlight. Members undertook important monitoring visits this year and hope to be more engaged in supporting the implementation of the programme.

Rights Holders (“Beneficiaries”)

Indicative numbers	Direct for 2021	Indirect for 2021	Comments / Explanations
Women (18 yrs. And above)	1451	170,417	An estimation of one third of the total population for the target Regions was used to determine the total girls as indirect beneficiaries whilst Two thirds was used to determine the women.
Girls (5-17)	473	85,208	
Men (18 yrs. And above)	737	164,286	An estimation of one third of the total population for the target Regions was used to determine the total boys as indirect



			beneficiaries whilst Two thirds was used to determine the men.
Boys (5-17 yrs.)	326	82,143	
Total	2987		

Challenges and Mitigating Measures

1. Delays in feedback on key documents from stakeholders resulted in late delivery of products. This also includes clearing of expenses for advanced funding for work. To overcome this challenge, the PCU held several follow-up engagements with stakeholders.
2. The time taken for recruitment to be completed owing to not receiving suitably qualified submissions was another setback. Call for proposals were advertised at least twice for many of the activities. To manage this issue, RUNOs sought to use the roster system and engage some of the existing implementing partners to undertake certain activities. Added to this existing challenge was the uncertainty of program extension beyond December 31, 2021, which created challenges with planning as timeframe for the implementation of activities had to be reduced. This resulted in CSOs withdrawing from the process indicating that it was not practical for the activities to be completed under 6 months. This was mitigated to some extent by reducing scope of programme activities in anticipation of the extension approval.
3. COVID 19 restrictions, resulted in postponement of most face-to-face engagements in communities. Where possible the planned workshops and training were done virtually. However, for the hinterland communities where the telephone service and access to internet and electricity is limited or non-existent once the lockdown restrictions were lifted, training was done after assessing the risk of face-to-face interactions under strict COVID-19 precaution measures. It is expected that through another UN guided project, there will be the establishment of ICT Hubs in three of the Spotlight Initiative hinterland target communities. This intervention will significantly benefit future Spotlight activities in these communities.
4. Within the hinterland communities there are no resident CSOs working in the areas, hence there were no focal points readily available. To resolve this challenge, a UN Volunteer was enlisted for two of the communities.



5. The rotation of trained law enforcement officers within the Regions impacts the sustainability of the efforts to provide quality preventative and responsive actions in addressing GBV related matters. It is expected that the proposed training of approximately 5,000 officers through the COPSQUAD initiative would resolve this challenge.
6. The Ministry of Health expressed some level of discomfort with requests to participate in multiple activities within the same period. This stalled implementation of some Spotlight activities. The Resident Coordinator and Heads of UN Agencies implementing Spotlight met with the leadership of the Ministry to agree on a way forward. The UN Team will continue to follow-up so that the affected activities could be accelerated.
7. The varying levels of support by the different national partners resulted in some delays in programmatic implementation. It has been recognized that to achieve the desired acceleration there should be renewed and increased engagements with national partners to secure the needed buy-in and support for some Spotlight Initiative activities.
8. There have been some implementation delays faced by partners pertaining to activities that are directly under their portfolio. The Resident Coordinator and the Heads of RUNOs have engaged these partners in an effort to help remedy delays and speed up implementation.
9. Inter-Agency coordination continues to be a challenge due to the independent policies and guidelines of each RUNO. With the commitment of focal points, sharing and leveraging of expertise were utilized to mitigate challenges encountered.

Lessons Learned and New Opportunities

Lessons Learned

1. Stakeholder/CSO mapping and capacity assessment should be done prior to or during program design.
2. Baseline data and readiness assessment should be completed during program design.



3. Public understanding of program objectives and outcomes are important and should be done during program design.
4. The use of media communication (radio and TV) on SI is very effective in creating awareness of program objectives, deliverables, and benefits.
5. Monitoring missions should be at least 3 days to facilitate adequate time for travelling and other logistics especially in the hinterland.
6. A whole of UN approach, in the spirit of UN Reform, in engaging key stakeholders is critical.

New Opportunities

1. During the year 2021, key partnerships were established with non-traditional organizations like the sports fraternity, religious and faith base organizations, and the Private Sector. This provided a great opportunity to expand the level of stakeholder involvement in addressing GBV issues in Guyana. Some of the work done with these partners included the development of manuals for faith-based organisations and policies to address gender equality and engaging the private sector on the women empowerment principles.

Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

Innovation

1. Development of iMatter GBV App

Under the Spotlight Initiative, a GBV App was created and is now accessible to the public. This App will allow anyone affected by violence to access information and the various agencies that can offer support or assistance. Users can also find the list of support services by region, information on any given GBV situation, laws pertaining to GBV and answers to frequently asked questions. Its design was informed by mapping GBV services in Guyana and supports the development of referral pathways for survivors. The app is easy to use and can be downloaded on any mobile phone and does not require internet connectivity to access information.

Promising or Good Practices

1. Establishment of Child Advocacy Centres



One good practice implemented during the period of review was the operationalization of two Child Advocacy Centres (CAC) in Region 6, the only coastal region without a CAC. This achievement was because of the collaboration of Child Link Inc. (an IP with SI) and the Childcare and Protection Agency (CPA) a department within the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. The objective of this initiative is to make essential services accessible to children who report sexual abuse. It will also build on other existing key partnerships with the police, the Judiciary, the Ministry of Health, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) NGOs to strengthen the system, the skills and knowledge of the officers providing the service.

2. Partnership with the Guyana Bar Association, Government of Guyana, the European Union, and the United Nations to offer legal aid to survivors of violence

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime⁵. Geared at eliminating instances of gender-based violence, the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, collaborating with the Guyana Bar Association and the United Nations, launched the Legal Pro-bono 500 Initiative. This will aid the provision of legal support services free of charge to GBV survivors and other vulnerable persons across Guyana, until the end of 2022. The United Nations has committed to providing human resources and technical assistance to aid the efficient provision of legal pro-bono services. This is viewed as a good practice since abuse is mostly perpetrated against the most vulnerable members of society who may not be able to afford legal representation.

3. Establishment of Gate Keepers Clubs

Gate Keepers Clubs were established in some hinterland communities under the Spotlight Initiative. A gatekeeper looks out for, and influences those within the community who need access to resource and supports the Village Council in addressing GBV related issues. They can impact the lives of those in their community as they provide a safe space and support those who need help. A gatekeeper can be anyone that is a member of the community, like a shopkeeper or a teacher, or a pastor.

The Gatekeeper Clubs are very impactful as residents are more aware of their roles, responsibilities, and rights and are more empowered to report abuse cases in their communities. This is believed to be a promising and good practice that should be implemented in all communities, as gatekeepers can spearhead and lead prevention

⁵ Guyana Bar Association collaborates with Gov't to offer legal aid to victims of violence
<https://dpi.gov.gy/guyana-bar-association-collaborates-with-govt-to-offer-legal-aid-to-victims-of-violence/>



initiatives. They are knowledgeable on the matters that affect their community, the resources available and are well-informed on how to help those within the community.

4. Establishing partnerships with non-traditional organizations

Violence against women and girls is everyone's business. Achieving a society free of violence can only be possible when everyone is involved in addressing it. In 2021, the Spotlight Initiative through one of its IP's partnered with the Guyana Cricket Board and the Guyana Football Federation to hold talks on key areas relating to GBV, and how as a corporate body, the sporting fraternity can lead preventative causes relating to GBV. These engagements led to the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy that is geared to establish a framework to keep their organization and by extension communities safe from violence, harassment, exclusion and other human rights violations. This is a promising practice because, according to statistics, men are the main perpetrators of GBV, and the membership of sporting fraternities are mostly men. Therefore, with such partnerships, men and boys can be empowered and encouraged to support and lead the prevention of GBV.

5. Messaging through Drama

In 2021, key GBV messaging was done through the popular local radio program led by 'Merundoi Inc.' and a local comedy sitcom 'Those people'. These episodes were aired on television and the internet and were dedicated to creating awareness of GBV issues, and their impact on society. It also provided information on the helplines and referral paths currently available to survivors through the MoHSSS and CSOs. These partnerships provided broad reach to various target audiences about GBV, their rights and responsibilities and how to seek help.

6. Translation of GBV Messages into Indigenous Languages

In the hinterland many residents are not fluent in speaking and understanding the English language, hence with the translation of the PSAs into their native language assisted in communicating the GBV messaging. This allowed for attaining a wider reach of the targeted audience.

Communications and Visibility

1) Overview



During the reporting period, communications and visibility activities were conducted by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative Programme Coordination Unit, and Implementing Partners, at the national level through traditional and digital channels: radio, television, newspapers, social media, website, events, and multimedia. Over 80,000 persons were informed about gender-based violence and related issues via message placement on a local comedy sitcom, along with the production of program results videos, hosting public virtual dialogues, and a social media campaign.

The European Union supported communications and visibility by sharing content on their social media platforms. The EU Ambassador actively participated in public events such as the launches of the [GBV app](#) and the Legal Pro-bono 500 initiative and the [opening of child advocacy centres](#). There was also participation in media and community outreaches along with the UN Resident Coordinator and Minister of Human Services and Social Security.

Implementing Partners also supported communications efforts through their social media platforms. Help and Shelter and St. Francis Community Developers conducted dedicated social media campaigns to highlight their Spotlight Initiative related work.

2) Messages

The key messages that were highlighted were: -

- The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030.
- The Spotlight Initiative demonstrates a significant, concerted, and comprehensive investment in ending violence against women and girls, to make a transformative difference in their lives, towards realizing gender equality.
- One in every two women in Guyana has or will experience Intimate Partner Violence in their lifetime.
- One in five (or 20 percent of) women in Guyana have experienced non-partner sexual abuse in their lifetime.

3) Media and visibility events



- [Launch of the legal Pro-bono 500 initiative](#). This event informed the public about legal aid services available to support victims of gender-based violence.
- A storyline on GBV was developed and commenced on a local internet and television sitcom 'Those People', which resulted in over 80,000 persons being informed about GBV and related issues.
- A radio interview, which saw participation by the EU Ambassador, Minister of Human Services and Social Security, and the UN Resident Coordinator, reached over 3700 persons via its Livestream. The public was informed about GBV in the context of human rights and program results to date.
- [Two \(2\) virtual dialogues](#) were hosted on Facebook with Spotlight Initiative Implementing Partners (Youth Challenge Guyana, Help and Shelter, Red Thread, Merundoi Inc., St. Francis Xavier, Blossom, Child Link, and Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association) to discuss program results. These dialogues collectively garnered over 2,600 organic views and reached over 6,400 persons during the live broadcast.
- A reception to commemorate the launch of the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' was held at the UN House, which featured a symbolic orange light-up of the UN House.
- [Two sports sensitization sessions](#) were facilitated with the Guyana Cricket Board and the Guyana Football Federation to promote gender equality within the sports community. Over 60 coaches, players and executive members were engaged on issues related to understanding gender-based violence and other related topics. The sessions were conducted by representatives from the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and Merundoi Inc., (SI implementing partner).
- Educational sessions on availability of services in one target community (Region 6) were conducted via 17 television programs (on 3 stations). These activities were supplemented by increased presence and engagement on Facebook. This resulted in an increase of over 100 percent utilization of services at St. Francis Community Developers (SI implementing partner) and at other service providers such as the Police, Health and Welfare departments.

4) Campaigns

A social media campaign saw a mix of posts on the UN Guyana Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube pages in the form of videos, static posts, statistics, events, videos, and photographic content. On the UN Guyana Facebook page, organic posts reached over



6,000 persons. The campaign is an ongoing one, which informs the public about GBV and related issues and results of the program.

5) Human interest stories/Testimonials:

Seven videos were produced and posted on the UN Guyana and Spotlight websites and social media pages. They provided insights from Spotlight Initiative beneficiaries, community mobilizers, and Implementing Partners on the work and benefits of the program.

6) Photos:



Launch of Legal Pro-bono 500 Initiative

Left - Right: Fernando Pontz Cantó, Ambassador of the European Union to Guyana; Yeşim Oruç, United Nations Resident Coordinator; Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security; Shanielle Hussain-Outar, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Human Services and Social Security; Pauline Chase, President of the Guyana Bar Association; and Adler Bynoe, Liaison Officer, UNFPA

Credit: Department of Public Information, Guyana



Credit: Office of the President Guyana

Launch of GBV App

Left - Right: Mikiko Tanaka, former UN Resident Coordinator; Fernando Pontz Cantó, Ambassador of the European Union to Guyana; His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana; Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security; and Adler Bynoe, Liaison Officer, UNFPA.



Credit: Harris Art/Tiffany Vasquez

Orange light up and reception at UN House in observance of 16 Days of Activism

Fernando Ponz Cantó, EU Ambassador (fourth from right); Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security (fifth from left), Yeşim Oruç, UN Resident Coordinator (fourth from left); UN Heads of agencies; and representatives of Implementing Partners at the light up reception of UN House during the 16 days of activism.





Completion of GBV training for Police Officers

Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security (fourth from left); Hon. Robeson Benn, Minister of Home Affairs (fifth from left); Adler Bynoe, Liaison Officer, UNFPA (second from left); and other officials of the Guyana Police Force and UNFPA with Police Officers who completed the GBV training.

Credit: Government of Guyana, Ministry of Human Services and Social Security



Outreach with the Guyana Football Federation

Wayne Forde, President of the Guyana Football Federation (first in front row) and coaches during the outreach.

Credit: UN Guyana/Colette Hytmiah-Singh





Capacity Buiding on GBV Data Collection, Analysis and Usage

Manav Sachdeva, facilitator, conducts training with personnel from the Guyana Police Force, the regional education and social services (probation and welfare) departments, and representatives from the Batavi Village Council.

Credit: UN Guyana/Fabion Jerrick

7) Videos:

1. [iMatter GBV app](#)
2. [Spotlight Results: Community Mobilisers, Lusignan and Diamond/Grove, Region 4](#)
3. [Spotlight Results: Community Mobilisers, Waramadong, Region 7](#)
4. [Spotlight Results: Beneficiaries, Waramadong, Region 7](#)
5. [Spotlight Results: Beneficiaries, Matthew's Ridge, Region 1](#)
6. [Spotlight Results: Beneficiaries, Berbice, Region 6](#)
7. [Spotlight Results: Training on data collection, Analysis and use, Bartica, Region 7](#)
8. [Spotlight Results: Engagement with the sports community](#)

Next Steps

In 2022, the lessons learned from programme implementation will facilitate consolidation of activities to achieve successful completion of phase one.



Outcome One

1. The development of the Sexual Harassment legislation
2. Consultations on the new Draft Domestic Violence Bill
3. Follow-up on reviews for draft for Domestic Violence Reforms

Outcome Two

1. Completion of National Action Plan for Sectors
2. Development of Strategic Plan for MoHSSS
3. Launch of Course at the University of Guyana (re: family Violence)
4. The mapping of social protection programmes with the aim of developing a plan of action to create/strengthen and operationalize a social safety net programme for survivors of gender-based violence. It is expected that the plan of action includes best practices for such programmes including alignment with the legal framework of Guyana, making provision for issuing of grants to survivors and promoting economic independence and psycho-social well-being of persons. The plan of action will also consider partnering with the private sector.

Outcome Three

1. Continued engagement of the CSOs to implement prevention and advocacy programmes within target communities.
2. Roll-out of the Foundations Programme to empower youths and influence behavior change to prevent GBV. Development of Gender Action Plans under the WEP Framework to support the private sector with tools for promoting gender equality within the work environment.

Outcome Four

1. Strengthening of GBV Essential Services Package for Guyana, in line with international standards
2. Development of the GBV One Stop Center and Mobile and Remote Service models for Guyana and operationalization of the model in SI target communities
3. Strengthening of GBV case management and information system management in Guyana

Outcome Five

1. Development of the national database for the collection, storage, accessibility of GBV data to inform responsive programs and policies
2. Conduct a multi-stakeholder forum on data sharing protocols towards the finalization of said protocols for access to and use of the database.



Outcome Six

1. Establishment of accountability framework for Police Officers and Health Care Workers
2. Continued support to the CSNRG
3. Completion of capacity building for CSOs

In addition to the completion of Phase 1 activities, planning and finalization of the second phase activities will be completed.

Annexes

- 1) Annex A: Results Framework
- 2) Annex B: Risk Matrix
- 3) Annex C: CSO Engagement Report
- 4) Annex D: Innovative, Promising or Good Practices Reporting Template
- 5) Annex E: Annual Work Plan

